VI. Account of a BOOK.

Catalogus Plantarum quæ in inſula Jamaica *ſponte proveniunt vel vulgo coluntur, cum earundem ſynonymis & locis natalibus; adjectis aliis quibuſdam quæ in inſulis Maderæ,* Barbados, *Nieves, & Sancti* Chriſtophori *naſcuntur, ſeu prodromi hiſtoriæ naturalis* Jamaicæ *pars prima. Autore* Hans Sloane *M. D. Coll. reg. Med.* Lond. *nec non Soc. Reg.* Lond. *Soc.* Londini *Impenſis* Dan. Brown *ad Inſigne Cygni, & Biblioram extra portam vulgo dictam* Temple-bar, 1696. in 8°. with ſome Remarks on it by *John Ray, A. M & F. R. S.*

THE Author of this Catalogue doth not preſent the Reader with Titles of Plants Collected out of other Mens Writings, or of which he had ſeen only dryed Specimens, but of ſuch as himſelf ſaw growing in their Native Places: Among which there are a great Multitude of New and *Non-deſcript* Species; in one Genus alone, *viz.* Thoſe called *Capillaries*, no leſs then Threeſcore, beſides thoſe lately Publiſhed by *F. Plumier* in his firſt Volume of *Deſcriptions of American Plants*, which our Author had obſerved and deſcribed long before that Book came out; and theſe not ſmall and contemptible ones, or hardly diſtinguiſhable from the Plants of that kind already deſcribed, but of eminent Stature and Beauty; and ſome of them of ſo ſtrange and exotick Form, that if delineated they could not

but invite, and gratefully entertain the Spectator's Eye. For Firſt, Who would not be delighted to ſee an arboreſcent Fern, of a ſingle Woody Stem, ſtreight and undivided, bearing leaves only at the top like a Palm-Tree? Capillaries of almoſt all kinds, creeping on Trees, or Rocks, or the Ground, with Wires after the manner of Strawberries: Or Thirdly Capillaries, the tip of whoſe leaves turning downwards, and touching the Earth takes Root and puts forth a new Plant, ſo Propagating their kind: Or Fourthly Capillaries putting forth from the middle Stem of their Leaves two ſhoots, each bearing a Spike of Flowers and Seeds. I confeſs, when I firſt ſaw the Authors ſtock of dryed Plants, collected in *Jamaica* and ſome of the *Caribee* Iſlands, I was much ſurpriſed and even aſtoniſhed at the number of the Capillary kind; not thinking there had been ſo many to be found in both the *Indies*. I might ſay much of the other *Genera*, but I refer the Reader to the Book it ſelf.

Secondly, The Author in this Catalogue hath done great Service, to at leaſt the inferior Ranks of Herbariſts, in reducing and cutting ſhort the number of Species, which were unneceſſarily multiplied: For obſerving, that thoſe who have publiſhed Itineraries, or Deſcriptions of the ſeveral parts of *America*, for want of ſufficient Skill in *Botanicks*, and not being verſed in Deſcribing Plants, have given us ſuch lame, imperfect, and obſcure Deſcriptions of ſuch as they took Notice of, and of the ſame Tree or Herb many times under different Names, that the Compilers of general Hiſtories of Plants meeting with theſe Deſcriptions, and having no other knowledge of ſuch Plants then what they derived from them, have repeated one and the ſame Species, found in far diſtant Countries by various Obſervers, and differently deſcribed, once, twice, thrice; (nay ſome great Authors ſometimes even nine times) over, for different kinds.

kinds. Now the Number of Plants being in Nature ſo vaſt, its pity to add to it more then there are in Nature, making two or three of one, thereby both detering and confounding the Learner. To clear up theſe difficulties,and to reduce all to their proper kinds, no man can be well qualified,but he that hath a Comprehenſive Knowledge of ſuch Plants as grow wild, or are commonly Cultivated in Gardens here in *Europe*, and hath ſeen the *non*-deſcript *Americans*, or ſuch as are here leſs known growing in their natural places; and hath read, conſidered, and compared what hath been written of them, either by ſuch who have lived ſome time in thoſe Countries, and publiſhed Deſcriptions or natural Hiſtories of them,or by ſuch as have only made Voyages thither, and given us Relations and Accounts of their Travels, and what they obſerved during their ſhort ſtay there: All which qualities occur in our Author.

Thirdly, This Work is of great uſe to thoſe that are delighted in reading the Relations and Accounts of Navigators and Travellers,to and in thoſe parts,to inform them concerning the Names of *American* and *Indian* Plants,they ſhall therein meet with, to what Plants they belong, and where they may find exact Deſcriptions or Characteriſtick Notes of them. The Author having with infinite Pains and Patience, read the moſt part of the Books of Voyages and Travels extant, referred the Plants he met with therein, named or deſcribed to their proper Genera, or Titles,under which they are Ranked, and by which they are denominated and Characterized by the moſt Learned and Skilful Herbariſts of the preſent, or immediately precedent Age.

Fourthly,The Author in this Work hath cleared up and reſolved many Doubts and Difficulties, and informed us of what Plants are ſignified by many Names frequent in the Mouths and Writings of our own Countrey-men,

of

of which before we were either Ignorant, or in ſome doubt. For Example, He hath informed us that the *Dumb Cane* ſo called, which being taſted, inflames the Tongue and Jaws in that manner, that for a while it takes away the uſe of Speech, is not properly any *Species* of Reed or Cane, but of *Arum* or Wake-Robin; which quality indeed agrees very well to the Nature of an *Arum*, which is very Acrimonious, but not to any ſort of Cane. That *Logwood* is not (as we conjectured) the *Ligno Braſiliano ſimile, ſeu Lignum Sapou, lanis tingendis percommodum* of *Caſpar Bauhine*, but *Lignum Campechianum*, ſo called from *Campeche*, a Province of the Continent of *America*, where they Fell Yearly great Store of theſe Trees, and bring them to *Jamaica* and our other Plantations, to be Tranſported hither for the uſe of Diers. That the *Dildoe-tree* is the ſame with the Cereus or Torch-Plant. *Cæterum Dildoe nonnullis Priapum fictitium ſignificat, quo effrænis laſcivæ mulierculæ abuti ſolent ad nefariæ quoddam libidinis genus ſeu coitum umbratilem exercendum.* I might add to theſe the *Toddy-Tree*, the *Prickly-pear*, the *Sower-Sop*, *Bonaviſts*, and many others whoſe Significations may be found in this Catalogue.

Beſides, We are aſſured by this Work, that there are ſome Plants common not only to *Europe* and *America*, but even to *England* and *Jamaica*, notwithſtanding the great diſtance of Place, and difference, both of Longitude and Climate. But here it is to be noted, that the greateſt part of theſe common Plants are ſuch as grow in the Water, or Watery-places; there being, it ſeems, a greater agreement between the temper of the Waters, then of the Air in theſe remotely diſtant Countries.

ERRATA.

No 220. Pag 256. Line 31. For *In a large quantity of it*, read *In a very ſmall drop of which.*

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